



*Region II*

# HSD/GED News



A Publication of the Region II HSD/GED Taskforce

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SPRING 2002

I am happy to introduce to you the first High School Diploma/GED Newsletter. Each issue will provide you with information about high school diploma programs and GED training. The purpose of this quarterly newsletter is to be a resource for you, and I hope it is also a useful tool for sharing information throughout the region.

There are several important educational initiatives happening in the Job Corps community. As you know, the U.S. Department of Education validated the high school diploma initiative by signing a Memorandum of Understanding to help ensure that Job Corps graduates have increased opportunities to earn high school diplomas, enhancing their long-term employment and earning prospects.

National Director Richard Trigg has set a national goal of increasing high school programs by 20 percent. For Region II to accomplish this national goal, we have set our own goal: All centers must have at least one partnership with a local high school by 2003.

What do these goals mean for your center? For those centers that already have partnerships with high schools, continue to foster those relationships. If your center has yet to partner with a high school, you have work ahead of you. On Page 3, there is a list describing the status of high school diploma programs at Region II centers. If your center needs help establishing a relationship with a school system, contact a Region II center that has a successful high school diploma partnership to talk with them about their experience.

Another initiative of national importance is GED 2002. The HSD/GED Taskforce will provide resources for you to better prepare your students for the new GED test.

As you review the newsletter, please remember to complete the feedback form and the section for your e-mail address on the insert. The taskforce plans to begin an e-mail distribution system to bring you important news between newsletter issues.

I appreciate all of your efforts to accomplish the national and regional goals. Our students are very excited about the opportunities.

Sincerely,

Lynn A. Intrepidi  
Regional Director, Philadelphia Region

## HSD/GED TASKFORCE... WHAT IS IT ALL ABOUT?

The HSD/GED Taskforce is a Regional committee of Regional Office Staff, center operator support staff, Center Directors, Academic Managers and teachers. The taskforce was created to gather information on strategies, best practices, and technology, which will improve the attainment of high school diplomas and GEDs throughout Region II. All Region II center operators and interagency partners are represented in the workgroup.

The taskforce was created in March 2001 and has met quarterly to develop new teaching methods and information dissemination to improve academic achievement in Region II. The workgroup is divided into five committees to focus on HSD and GED initiatives. The committees are: Best Practices, ADA/Special Needs Students, State Regulations, High School Diploma and Quarterly Newsletter.

During our last meeting in March 2002, we brainstormed on ways to communicate information gathered by the workgroup and the committees. The Newsletter is a tool to provide information to all staff involved in academics in our Region II centers. It is also a method whereby you can provide information and ask questions of the workgroup to help you in your daily activities at your center.

In February, we sent a questionnaire to all the Academic Managers at each center. The purpose of the questionnaire was to gain feedback from each center on HSD and GED issues. The information we received will help us generate ideas for our next newsletters. If you have a question or concern that you would like included in the next issue, please contact Maury Caby at McNeely Pigott & Fox, (615) 259-4000 or [mcaby@mpf.com](mailto:mcaby@mpf.com).

This first newsletter is an introduction issue on the HSD/GED Taskforce. We want to provide an overview of the taskforce's objectives and descriptions of topics we discussed in our past meetings. In our next issue, we plan to include student success stories and center spotlights. If you have a student success story, please complete the questionnaire on the insert.

This workforce group is your resource for all high school diploma and GED training news. The taskforce looks forward to providing you with information from the regional and national levels and keeping you aware of new teaching practices and materials that are available to you.



# BEST PRACTICES

The Best Practices Committee examines various areas of instruction to help teachers in and out of the classroom. The major topics covered by the committee in past meetings include the following: resources, teaching techniques, calculator use, teaching methods for grids, charts and graphs, GED testing preparation, tutoring, student involvement, staff development and monitoring progress at each center. Instructors should be aware of the following recommended teaching approaches in each area.

## 1. Resources

Practice tests help prepare students for state GED tests and give them an opportunity to experience a testing environment similar to the actual test. Below is a list of model tests that can be used for student practice.

- The official practice test developed by Steck-Vaughn
- Contemporary publishing model tests

Other good learning resources include:

- Computer-driven software such as Aztec Software and Educational Activities Software
- The Job Corps Career Development Resource Center, [www.jccdr.org](http://www.jccdr.org)

Web-site applications such as:

- Criterion Writing Program by ETS Technologies

Criterion has a free demo on their Web site: [www.etstechnologies.com/criterion](http://www.etstechnologies.com/criterion). The company's national marketing representative, Carolyn Rackley, can be contacted at (770) 993-6707 or [crackley@ets.org](mailto:crackley@ets.org).

Literacy Link by KET. Information is available at: <http://www.ket.org/enterprise/links/>

## 2. Teaching techniques

Instructors tend to use varying teaching strategies for different subject areas. The Best Practices Committee has researched various teaching methods and recommends that instructors consider incorporating the following into their plans.

Direct Instruction is a teaching technique that allows teachers to interact with students by asking questions and encouraging feedback. Examples of direct instruction activities include: hands-on projects, science experiments, field trips to historic sites and use of guest speakers. Direct instruction works best with small classes, i.e., when the student to teacher ratio is 12:1.

Other recommended teaching techniques include:

- Use newspaper comics and political cartoons in the classroom. Teachers can white out the dialogue and ask the students to create their own possible scenarios.
- Engage students in group discussions about local and world events. Encourage students to defend their positions with facts and empirical data, rather than with emotionally based arguments.
- Start a student debate team.

## 3. Calculator use

Students will become more familiar with the official GED calculator if it is introduced in the beginning of math instruction. Use in the application portion of the Math TABE can also help students learn the calculator's various operations. An instructional video and overheads are available to help teach students to use the calculator. (Remember to let students know they have the option to use the calculator, or a pad and pencil on the actual GED test.) To encourage calculator use among students outside their GED classes, provide the device to other staff who frequently interact with the students, such as vocational instructors.

## 4. Teaching methods for grids, charts and graphs

**Grids** – Students will solve gridding problems more efficiently on the GED when the format of the grid is taught early during math training. Teachers should provide samples of both accurate and inaccurate gridding to teach the correct way to answer a grid question. There is also an instructional video available on how to correctly grid an answer on the GED test.

**Charts and Graphs** – To help students read and decipher charts and graphs on the social studies section, use examples from news magazines.

## 6. GED test preparation

Teachers should prepare students mentally and emotionally for the GED test. Below are some tips to help students feel more comfortable about taking the test.

- Create a fact sheet that contains general information about GED testing. Some state regulations may require a student to take the entire pre-test before they can take the GED. Make sure that students are aware of state requirements and re-testing procedures.
- Administer the TABE level A before GED testing.
- Provide the GED practice test in an environment similar to the actual test.
- Inform students about test anxiety and ways to reduce stress levels.
- Give practice tests to students frequently.
- Make sure to test students when they are at their peak performance levels.

### Special Note:

On practice exams, a student can go back to part one on the math test, but in the real exam, he or she cannot. Make sure your students practice the math section like it is the actual test.

## 7. Tutoring

In conjunction with classroom training, tutoring can help prepare students for the GED. Creating a tutor club at your center can bolster a cooperative learning environment for students. Encourage students who have passed their GED test to volunteer as tutors to those preparing to take the test. The student doing the tutoring can use this activity toward his or her community service requirement while enrolled in Job Corps. (Note: Be sure to enter this information into the student's employability kit and Page 5 of the PCDP.)

You can also look for volunteer tutors in nearby communities. Some possibilities include: neighboring universities and associations of retired people and/or teachers.

*(Continued on next page)*

## 9. Staff development

Staff development activities can help teachers develop better teaching practices. Instructors should identify free workshops, which provide CEU credits, and volunteer as presenters at training sessions, conferences and workshops.

The Steck-Vaughn program provides an online chat room where teachers can discuss instructional techniques and other issues. Teachers should also utilize GED instructor links and staff development Web sites such as <http://hub1.worlded.org/docs/surfing/index.htm>.

## 10. Monitoring progress

Student progress on the GED can be monitored closely at regularly scheduled staff meetings. Developing a spreadsheet of necessary student information, such as name, highest grade completed, practice test scores, etc., can help simplify the monitoring process. Remember to discuss the GED with students who have taken the test. Compile the feedback and the results in an organized document to share with center students and staff.

# REGION II

## High School Diploma Program Updates

### JOB CORPS CENTER

### PARTNERING HIGH SCHOOL

#### DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Potomac Job Corps Center

Ballou STAY High School of the Washington, D.C., school system

#### KENTUCKY

Carl D. Perkins Job Corps Center

Paintsville Independent school system

Earle C. Clements Job Corps Center

Union County school system

Frenchburg Job Corps Center

Fayette and Menifee county school systems

Great Onyx Job Corps Center

Jefferson County school system

Pine Knot Job Corps Center

McCreary County school system

Whitney M. Young Job Corps Center

Jefferson County school system

Muhlenberg Job Corps Center has contracted with the Novel online program.

#### MARYLAND

In Maryland, GEDs are automatically converted to a Steck-issued high school diploma from the state. **Woodstock and Woodland Job Corps centers** are exploring education linkages and the Novel online program.

#### PENNSYLVANIA

**Keystone Job Corps Center** is a licensed private academic school. All courses are state-approved, and the teachers must have secondary certification in the subject area that they are teaching. Keystone awards its own diplomas.

**Philadelphia Job Corps Center** has a co-enrollment program with William Penn High School.

**Pittsburgh Job Corps Center** is exploring the Novel online program and a partnership with Keystone National High School.

**Red Rock Job Corps Center** partners with a local high school, but a formal MOU has not been signed.

#### VIRGINIA

**Blue Ridge Job Corps Center** partners with the Smyth County Career and Technology Center to offer a night high school diploma program to students through the Smyth County adult basic education program.

**Flatwoods Job Corps Center** is just beginning the Novel online program.

**Old Dominion Job Corps Center** is hoping to develop a high school co-enrollment program.

#### WEST VIRGINIA

**Charleston Job Corps Center** is planning to implement the Novel online program.

**Harpers Ferry Job Corps Center** is exploring the Novel online program.

# WHAT'S NEW IN REGION II

## ADA / SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS

The ADA/Special Needs Committee focuses on practices to help teachers with students who have special needs or behavioral problems. The committee plans to send a survey to all academic managers to learn their concerns and needs regarding these challenged students. The committee is eager to know your thoughts and suggestions, so please remember to complete the survey in a timely manner.

## STUDENT EVALUATION

Most Job Corps centers have access to the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) that was developed by the student's previous school system. Many times an IEP remains in a center's Records Department because of center procedures or policies on protecting a student's right to privacy. However, instructors should have access to the information on the IEP, as well as any of the student's psychology records. Admissions Counselors should assist the Job Corps applicant in obtaining school records and an IEP, if available.

If a student has an IEP, the "recommendation section" is what each teacher should review. Staff should use caution when reading the recommendation sections because some school systems might have mislabeled a student. To prevent mislabeling at Job Corps, centers should develop or obtain an assessment tool and create an academic checklist to help instructors evaluate a student's classroom and instructional needs.

Woodland Job Corps Center has created an assessment form that helps teachers deal with students who have behavioral problems. The teacher completes a referral observation form by describing the problem he or she is having with the student in the classroom. The form evaluates the student's actions in comparison to those of other students. The document is presented to a referral panel and one person from that panel observes the problem student in a classroom setting. Suggestions are made to the instructor to help him or her better

teach the student, and the panel and the instructor develop a plan to meet the student's needs.

Centers should establish a relationship with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies (OVR) to assist students with special needs. Some states provide services including: initial assessments, full psychological batteries, diagnoses and accommodations for GED testing. Ask the OVR representative to come on center at least once a month for intakes, follow-ups and a meeting with the center mental health consultant.

Each state may provide training sessions for teachers on behavioral or special needs students. In Kentucky there are free classes in special education available to Job Corps staff. Make sure to check out what your state offers.



## STATE REGULATIONS

At the March 2002 HSD/GED Taskforce meeting, Carmen Feola presented a GED 2002 Teachers' Handbook of Lesson Plans prepared by the Florida GED 2002 Project of the Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton. The lesson plans cover each GED subject and are available on the Internet in Adobe Acrobat format. The entire handbook of lesson plans was downloaded on a CD, and a copy was prepared for each center. Individuals from the HSD/GED Taskforce took their center copy. The following centers had their CD distributed to them or Regional Bulletin dated April 5. The following centers received the CD with the bulletin: Blue Ridge, Carl D.

Perkins, Charleston, Flatwoods, Harpers Ferry, Muhlenberg, Old Dominion, Pine Knot, Pittsburgh, Potomac and Red Rock.

## CHARTER SCHOOLS

Charter schools are public educational institutions that have entered into a contractual agreement with a local or state education agency to provide secondary education for a period of time. For example, Guajome Park Academy (GPA) has partnered with Job Corps in California. A list of Charter School Program State Representatives indicates that the District of Columbia, Delaware, Pennsylvania and Virginia have representatives; Kentucky, Maryland and West Virginia do not.

## VIRTUAL SCHOOLS

Online learning delivered through virtual schools has grown dramatically in the last five years. Virtual schools focus on the use of the Internet and World Wide Web to deliver course content. The Keystone National High School program in Bloomsburg, Pa., has a tuition-based, online high school program. The program is accredited by four education associations and licensed by the state board of private licensed schools.

Below are facts about the most popular virtual high school diploma program, Novel.

## NOVEL ONLINE PROGRAM

- Costs \$10,000 for one year
- Considered an accredited high school
- Designed for students who lack up to five credits for high school diploma completion
- Approximately 140 hours = 1 classroom credit or 2 months per credit
- All diplomas are state-related.

# JOB CORPS

**Success lasts a lifetime.**